

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

3 SENATE BILL 1896

By: Standridge

5 AS INTRODUCED

6 An Act relating to the Strong Readers Act; amending
7 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508C, as last amended by
8 Section 2, Chapter 297, O.S.L. 2025 (70 O.S. Supp.
9 2025, Section 1210.508C), which relates to reading
10 assessments; modifying goal of administering certain
11 screening instruments; removing factor to be given
12 certain consideration in approving instruments;
13 requiring school districts to provide certain notice
14 of certain deficiency; exempting students who
15 demonstrate proficiency on certain screening
16 instrument from retention; requiring notification to
17 the student's parent or legal guardian; requiring
18 retention of certain third-grade students who have
19 not demonstrated proficiency through certain
20 instrument, have not met certain grade-level targets
21 on certain statewide assessment, and who do not
22 qualify for certain exemption; allowing certain
students to be evaluated for probationary promotion
by a Student Reading Proficiency Team; requiring the
team to continue to review certain performance of
certain students; requiring school districts to
include certain information in annual report;
requiring notification to a parent or legal guardian
to include certain information; providing good-cause
exemptions for promotion of certain students;
providing process to request good-cause exemptions;
updating statutory language; updating statutory
reference; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508D,
as amended by Section 6, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70
O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508D), which relates to
Strong Readers Act funding; directing allocation of
funds for certain retained students; providing an
effective date; and declaring an emergency.

1 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

2 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508C,
3 as last amended by Section 2, Chapter 297, O.S.L. 2025 (70 O.S.
4 Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508C), is amended to read as follows:

5 Section 1210.508C. A. To identify students who have a
6 deficiency in reading or who have characteristics of dyslexia that
7 lead to or cause reading difficulty, each student enrolled in
8 kindergarten and first, second, and third grade in a public school
9 in this state shall be screened at the beginning, middle, and end of
10 each school year for reading skills including, but not limited to,
11 phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and
12 comprehension. A screening instrument approved by the State Board
13 of Education, in consultation with the Commission for Educational
14 Quality and Accountability and the Secretary of Education, shall be
15 utilized for the purposes of this section. In determining which
16 screening instrument to approve, the State Board of Education, the
17 Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability, and the
18 Secretary of Education shall take into consideration at a minimum
19 the following factors:

20 1. The time required to conduct the screening instrument with
21 the intention of minimizing the impact on instructional time;

22 2. The timeliness in reporting screening instrument results to
23 teachers, administrators, and parents and legal guardians of
24 students; and

1 3. The integration of the screening instrument into reading
2 curriculum.

3 B. Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, the State Board of
4 Education shall approve no fewer than three screening instruments
5 for use at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year for
6 monitoring of progress and for measurement of reading skills as
7 required in subsection A of this section. The screening instruments
8 shall meet the following criteria:

9 1. Assess for phonological awareness, decoding, fluency,
10 vocabulary, and comprehension;
11 2. Document the validity and reliability of each assessment;
12 3. Can be used for identifying students who are at risk for
13 reading deficiency and progress monitoring throughout the school
14 year; and
15 4. Can be used to assess students with disabilities and English
16 language learners; and
17 5. ~~Accompanied by a data management system that provides
18 profiles of each student, class, grade level, and school building.
19 The profiles shall identify each student's instructional point of
20 need and reading achievement level. The State Board shall also
21 determine other comparable reading assessments for diagnostic
22 purposes to be used for students at risk of reading failure.~~

23 C. 1. Exemptions to the screening requirements of this section
24 may be provided to students who have documented evidence that they

1 meet at least one of the following criteria as related to the
2 provision of classroom instruction:

- 3 a. the student participates in the Oklahoma Alternate
4 Assessment Program (OAAP) and is taught using
5 alternate methods,
- 6 b. the student's primary expressive or receptive
7 communication is sign language,
- 8 c. the student's primary form of written or read text is
9 Braille, or
- 10 d. the student's primary expressive or receptive language
11 is not English, the student is identified as an
12 English learner using a state-approved identification
13 assessment, and the student has had less than one (1)
14 school year of instruction in an English-learner
15 program.

16 2. A public school that grants an exemption pursuant to
17 paragraph 1 of this subsection shall provide ongoing evidence of
18 student progression toward English language acquisition with the
19 same frequency as administration of screening assessments. Evidence
20 may include, but not be limited to, student progression toward OAAP
21 reading essential elements, proficiency in sign language and reading
22 comprehension, and proficiency in Braille and reading comprehension.

23 D. 1. Students who are administered a screening instrument
24 pursuant to subsection A of this section and are found not to be

1 meeting grade-level targets shall be provided a program of reading
2 instruction designed to enable students to acquire the appropriate
3 grade-level reading skills. The program of reading instruction
4 shall be based on scientific reading research and align with the
5 subject matter standards adopted by the State Board of Education. A
6 program of reading instruction shall include:

- 7 a. sufficient additional in-school instructional time for
8 the acquisition of phonological awareness, decoding,
9 fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension,
- 10 b. if necessary and if funding is available, tutorial
11 instruction after regular school hours, on Saturdays,
12 and during summer; however, such instruction may not
13 be counted toward the ~~one-hundred-eighty-day one-~~
14 ~~hundred-eighty-one-day~~ or ~~one-thousand-eighty-hour~~
15 ~~one-thousand-eighty-six-hour~~ school year required in
16 Section 1-109 of this title,
- 17 c. assessments identified for diagnostic purposes and
18 periodic monitoring to measure the acquisition of
19 reading skills including, but not limited to,
20 phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary,
21 and comprehension, as identified in the student's
22 program of reading instruction,
- 23 d. high-quality instructional materials grounded in
24 scientifically based reading research, and

- e. a means of providing every family of a student in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first, second, and third grade access to free online evidence-based literacy instruction resources to support the student's literacy development at home.

2. A student enrolled in kindergarten or first, second, or third grade who exhibits a deficiency in reading at any time based on the screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this section shall receive an individual reading intervention plan no later than thirty (30) days after the identification of the deficiency in reading. The reading intervention plan shall be provided in addition to core reading instruction that is provided to all students. The reading intervention plan shall:

a. describe the research-based reading intervention services the student will receive to remedy the deficiency in reading,

b. provide explicit and systematic instruction in phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as applicable,

- c. monitor the reading progress of each student's reading skills throughout the school year and adjust instruction according to the student's needs, and

d. continue until the student is determined to be meeting grade-level targets in reading based on screening

instruments administered pursuant to subsection A of this section or assessments identified for diagnostic purposes and periodic monitoring pursuant to subparagraph c of paragraph 1 of this subsection.

3. The reading intervention plan for each student identified with a deficiency in reading shall be developed by a Student Reading Proficiency Team and shall include supplemental instructional services and supports. Each team shall be composed of:

- a. the parent or legal guardian of the student,
- b. the teacher assigned to the student who had responsibility for reading instruction in that academic year,
- c. a teacher who is responsible for reading instruction and is assigned to teach in the next grade level of the student, and
- d. a certified reading specialist or an individual with advanced training or specialization in literacy instruction, if one is available.

4. A school district shall notify the parent or legal guardian of any student in kindergarten or first, second, or third grade who exhibits a deficiency in reading at any time based on the screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this section. The notification shall occur no later than thirty (30) days after the identification of the deficiency in reading.

1 E. 1. Every school district shall adopt and implement a
2 district strong readers plan which has had input from school
3 administrators, teachers, and parents and legal guardians and if
4 possible a reading specialist, and which shall be submitted
5 electronically to and approved by the State Board of Education. The
6 plan shall be updated annually. School districts shall not be
7 required to electronically submit the annual updates to the Board if
8 the last plan submitted to the Board was approved and expenditures
9 for the program include only expenses relating to individual and
10 small group tutoring, purchase of and training in the use of
11 screening and assessment measures, summer school programs, and
12 Saturday school programs. If any expenditure for the program is
13 deleted or changed or any other type of expenditure for the program
14 is implemented, the school district shall be required to submit the
15 latest annual update to the Board for approval. The district strong
16 readers plan shall include a plan for each site which includes an
17 analysis of the data provided by the Oklahoma School Testing Program
18 and other reading assessments utilized as required in this section,
19 and which outlines how each school site will comply with the
20 provisions of the Strong Readers Act.

21 2. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules for the
22 implementation and evaluation of the provisions of the Strong
23 Readers Act. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited to,
24 an analysis of the data required in subsection ~~E~~ O of this section.

1 F. 1. Any first-grade, second-grade, or third-grade student
2 who demonstrates proficiency in reading through a grade-level
3 appropriate screening instrument approved pursuant to subsection B
4 of this section shall not require a program of reading instruction
5 or an individual reading intervention plan. After a student has
6 demonstrated proficiency through a screening instrument, the
7 district shall provide notification to the parent or legal guardian
8 of the student that he or she has satisfied the requirements of the
9 Strong Readers Act. The district shall continue to monitor the
10 student in the next successive grade level to ensure he or she
11 maintains proficiency.

12 2. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, if a third-grade
13 student is identified at any point of the academic year as having a
14 significant reading deficiency, which shall be defined as not
15 meeting grade-level targets on a screening instrument administered
16 pursuant to subsection A of this section, the district shall provide
17 the student with intensive intervention services for the appropriate
18 amount of the instructional day consistent with the individual
19 reading intervention plan developed pursuant to paragraph 2 of
20 subsection D of this section and as determined by the Student
21 Reading Proficiency Team. The district shall also provide notice of
22 the significant reading deficiency to the student's parent or legal
23 guardian as provided for by paragraph 4 of subsection D of this
24 section. Intensive intervention services shall continue until the

1 student demonstrates proficiency at his or her grade level based on
2 a screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this
3 section.

4 G. 1. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, a student
5 enrolled in first, second, or third grade who demonstrates
6 proficiency in reading at the third-grade level through a screening
7 instrument approved pursuant to subsection B of this section shall
8 not be subject to retention pursuant to this section. After a
9 student has demonstrated proficiency through a screening instrument,
10 the school district shall provide notification to the parent or
11 legal guardian of the student that he or she has satisfied the
12 requirements of the Strong Readers Act.

13 2. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, a third-grade
14 student who has not demonstrated proficiency in reading at the
15 third-grade level through a screening instrument approved pursuant
16 to subsection B of this section, who has not met grade-level
17 performance based on scores for the standards for reading
18 foundations and processes and the vocabulary portions of the
19 statewide third-grade assessment administered pursuant to Section
20 1210.508 of this title, and is not subject to a good-cause exemption
21 as provided for in subsection K of this section, shall not be
22 eligible for automatic promotion to fourth grade and shall be
23 retained in the third grade and provided intensive intervention
24 services as provided for in subsection F of this section. The

1 performance levels established by the Commission for Educational
2 Quality and Accountability pursuant to Section 1210.508 of this
3 title shall ensure that students meeting the performance level
4 criteria are performing at grade level on the reading foundations
5 and processes and the vocabulary portions of the statewide third-
6 grade assessment.

7 3. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, a third-grade
8 student who has not demonstrated proficiency in reading at the
9 third-grade level through a screening instrument approved pursuant
10 to subsection B of this section, who has not met grade-level
11 performance based on scores for the standards for reading
12 foundations and processes and the vocabulary portions of the
13 statewide third-grade assessment administered pursuant to Section
14 1210.508 of this title, and is not subject to a good-cause exemption
15 as provided for in subsection K of this section may be evaluated for
16 probationary promotion by the Student Reading Proficiency Team
17 created pursuant to subsection D of this section. A student shall
18 be promoted if the team members unanimously recommend probationary
19 promotion to the school principal and the school district
20 superintendent, and they agree to approve the recommendation that
21 promotion is the best option for the student. If a student is
22 granted probationary promotion, the team shall continue to review
23 the reading performance of the student until he or she demonstrates
24 grade-level reading proficiency, as identified through a screening

1 instrument for the corresponding grade level in which the student is
2 enrolled.

3 H. Each school district shall annually report in an electronic
4 format to the State Department of Education, the Office of
5 Educational Quality and Accountability, and the Secretary of
6 Education the number of third-grade students retained pursuant to
7 this section, the number of third-grade students promoted to the
8 fourth grade due to a good-cause exemption as provided for in
9 subsection K of this section by each category of good cause, the
10 number of students in kindergarten through third grade per grade
11 level who exhibit grade-level reading proficiency, the number of
12 students per grade level who received intensive intervention
13 services pursuant to ~~paragraph 2 of~~ subsection F of this section,
14 the number of students per grade level who attended a summer academy
15 as provided for in Section 1210.508E of this title, the number of
16 students per grade level who exhibited improved reading proficiency
17 after completion of intensive intervention services, and the number
18 of students per grade level who are still in need of intensive
19 intervention services. The State Department of Education shall
20 publicly report the aggregate and district-specific numbers
21 submitted pursuant to this subsection on its website and shall
22 provide electronic copies of the report to the Governor, Secretary
23 of Education, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Speaker of the
24 House of Representatives, and to the respective chairs of the

1 committees with responsibility for common education policy in each
2 legislative chamber.

3 ~~H.~~ I. The parent of any student who is found to have a reading
4 deficiency and is not meeting grade-level reading targets and has
5 been provided a program of reading instruction as provided for in
6 paragraph 1 of subsection D of this section shall be notified in
7 writing of the following:

8 1. That the student has been identified as having a substantial
9 deficiency in reading;

10 2. A description of the current services that are provided to
11 the student pursuant to subsection D of this section;

12 3. A description of the proposed intensive intervention
13 services and supports that will be provided to the student that are
14 designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency as
15 provided for in ~~paragraph 2 of~~ subsection F of this section;

16 4. That a student ~~who is~~ shall not be promoted to the fourth
17 grade if he or she has not demonstrated proficiency in reading at
18 the third-grade level through a screening instrument approved
19 pursuant to subsection B of this section and has not met grade-level
20 performance based on scores for the standards for reading
21 foundations and processes and the vocabulary portions of the
22 statewide third-grade assessment administered pursuant to Section
23 1210.508 of this title unless the student qualifies for a good-cause
24 exemption as provided for in subsection K of this section. A

1 student who is promoted due to a good-cause exemption shall receive
2 supplemental intensive intervention services;

3 5. Strategies for parents to use in helping their child succeed
4 in reading proficiency; and

5 6. The grade-level performance scores of the student.

6 I. J. No student may be assigned to a grade level based solely
7 on age or other factors that constitute social promotion.

8 I. K. For those students who have not demonstrated proficiency
9 in reading at the third-grade level through a screening instrument
10 approved pursuant to subsection B of this section and have not met
11 grade-level performance based on scores for the standards for
12 reading foundations and processes and the vocabulary portions of the
13 statewide third-grade assessment administered pursuant to Section
14 1210.508 of this title, a school district may promote the student
15 for good cause only. Good-cause exemptions for promotion shall be
16 limited to the following:

17 1. English language learners who have had fewer than two (2)
18 years of instruction in an English language learner program;

19 2. Students with disabilities whose individualized education
20 program (IEP), consistent with state law, indicates that the student
21 is to be assessed with alternate achievement standards through the
22 OAAP;

1 3. Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of performance
2 on an alternative standardized reading assessment approved by the
3 State Board of Education;

4 4. Students with disabilities who participate in the statewide
5 assessments administered pursuant to Section 1210.508 of this title
6 and who have an IEP that reflects that the students have received
7 intensive remediation in reading for more than two (2) years but
8 still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and were previously
9 retained in prekindergarten for academic reasons, kindergarten,
10 first grade, second grade, or third grade;

11 5. Students who have received intensive remediation in reading
12 through a program of reading instruction for two (2) or more years
13 but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who were
14 previously retained in prekindergarten for academic reasons, first
15 grade, second grade, or third grade for a total of two (2) years;
16 and

17 6. Students who have been granted an exemption for medical
18 emergencies by the State Department of Education.

19 L. To request a good-cause exemption provided for in subsection
20 K of this section, the student's teacher shall submit documentation
21 to the school principal that indicates the student meets one of the
22 good-cause exemptions and promotion of the student is appropriate.
23 The principal shall review the request and make a recommendation to
24 the school district superintendent regarding whether the request

1 should be approved. The school district superintendent shall
2 approve or disapprove the request and submit the response in writing
3 to the school principal who submitted the recommendation.

4 M. 1. Each school district board of education shall annually
5 publish on the school website and report electronically to the State
6 Department of Education, the Office of Educational Quality and
7 Accountability, and the Secretary of Education by September 1 of
8 each year the following information on the prior school year:

9 a. the policies and procedures adopted by the school
10 district board of education to implement the
11 provisions of this section. The information submitted
12 shall include expenditures related to implementing the
13 provisions of this section, the number of staff
14 implementing the provisions of this section, and
15 average daily classroom time devoted to implementing
16 the provisions of this section,

17 b. by grade, the number and percentage of all students in
18 kindergarten through third grade who did not meet
19 grade-level targets based on a screening instrument
20 administered pursuant to subsection A of this section,

21 c. by grade, the number and percentage of all students in
22 kindergarten through third grade who have been
23 enrolled in the district for fewer than two (2) years,

d. by grade, the number and percentage of students in kindergarten through third grade who demonstrated grade-level proficiency based on a screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this section, and

e. by grade, the number and percentage of students in kindergarten through third grade who are on an individualized education program (IEP) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and who demonstrated grade-level proficiency based on a screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this section or an alternative assessment prescribed by the student's IEP.

2. The State Department of Education shall establish a uniform format for school districts to report the information required in this subsection. The format shall be developed with input from school districts and shall be provided not later than ninety (90) days prior to the annual due date. The Department shall annually compile the information required, along with state-level summary information, and electronically report the information to the public, the Governor, the Secretary of Education, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

1 K. N. The State Department of Education shall provide technical
2 assistance as needed to aid school districts in administering the
3 provisions of the Strong Readers Act.

4 L. O. On or before January 31 of each year, the State
5 Department of Education shall electronically submit to the Governor,
6 the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of
7 Representatives, and members of the committees with responsibility
8 over common education in both houses of the Legislature a Strong
9 Readers Report which shall include, but is not limited to, trend
10 data detailing three (3) years of data, disaggregated by student
11 subgroups to include economically disadvantaged, major racial or
12 ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and English language
13 learners, as appropriate for the following:

14 1. The statewide aggregate number and percentage of students in
15 kindergarten through third grade determined to be at risk for
16 reading difficulties compared to the total number of students
17 enrolled in each grade;

18 2. The statewide aggregate number and percentage of students in
19 kindergarten who continue to be at risk for reading difficulties as
20 determined by the year-end administration of the screening
21 instrument required in subsection A of this section;

22 3. The statewide aggregate number and percentage of students in
23 kindergarten through third grade who have successfully completed
24 their program of reading instruction and are reading on grade level

1 as determined by the results of screening instruments administered
2 pursuant to subsection A of this section;

3 4. The statewide aggregate and district-specific number and
4 percentage of students that meet or do not meet grade-level targets
5 for reading based on screening instruments administered pursuant to
6 subsection A of this section;

7 5. The amount of funds received by each district for
8 implementation of the Strong Readers Act;

9 6. An evaluation and narrative interpretation of the report
10 data analyzing the impact of the Strong Readers Act on students'
11 ability to read at grade level;

12 7. The type of reading instruction practices and methods
13 currently being used by school districts in the state;

14 8. Socioeconomic information, access to reading resources
15 outside of school, and screening for and identification of learning
16 disabilities for students not reading at the appropriate grade level
17 in kindergarten and first through third grade;

18 9. By grade level, the types of intensive intervention efforts
19 being conducted by school districts for students who are not on an
20 IEP and who are not reading at the appropriate grade level and for
21 students who are on an IEP and who are not reading at the
22 appropriate grade level; and

23 10. Any recommendations for improvements or amendments to the
24 Strong Readers Act.

1 The State Department of Education may contract with an
2 independent entity for the reporting and analysis requirements of
3 this subsection.

4 M. P. Copies of the results of the screening instruments
5 administered pursuant to subsection A of this section shall be made
6 a part of the permanent record of each student.

7 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508D,
8 as amended by Section 6, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.
9 2025, Section 1210.508D), is amended to read as follows:

10 Section 1210.508D. A. Contingent on the provision of
11 appropriated funds designated for the Strong Readers Act, school
12 districts may be allocated monies for each enrolled kindergarten
13 student or first-, second-, and third-grade student of the current
14 school year, including any student who has been retained in the
15 third grade pursuant to Section 1210.508C of this title, who is
16 found to be in need of remediation or intensive intervention
17 services in reading. The allocation shall be distributed to each
18 school district upon approval of the strong readers plan for the
19 school district by the State Board of Education and the submittal of
20 a child-count report to the State Department of Education that
21 details the number of students identified as needing remediation or
22 intensive intervention services in reading. To determine a per-
23 student allocation amount, the total amount of funds available for
24 allocation each year shall be divided by the total number of

1 students in the state identified as in need of remediation or
2 intensive intervention services in reading as provided for in
3 Section 1210.508C of this title. Each school district shall be
4 allocated an amount equal to the per-student allocation amount
5 multiplied by the number of identified students enrolled in the
6 school district.

7 B. Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, districts
8 receiving more than Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00)
9 pursuant to subsection A of this section shall spend no less than
10 ten percent (10%) to provide professional development for teachers
11 teaching prekindergarten through grade five. The professional
12 development shall include training in the science of reading
13 including how students learn to read; training in providing explicit
14 and systematic instruction in phonological awareness, decoding,
15 fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; implementing reading
16 strategies that research has shown to be successful in improving
17 reading among students with reading difficulties; and instructional
18 materials required for implementation.

19 C. By June 30, 2022, the Department shall approve and publish a
20 list of professional development programs that are evidence-based
21 and directly address the cognitive science of how students learn to
22 read for which districts are permitted to use the funds received
23 under this section.

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1 D. If a teacher attends and completes a professional
2 development institute in elementary reading approved by the
3 Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability during the
4 summer or when school is not in session, the teacher may receive a
5 stipend equal to the amount of the cost for a substitute teacher,
6 based on the amount of funds allocated.

7 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2026.

8 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
9 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
10 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
11 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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